

REMARKS

The Applicants have considered the Office Action dated March 25, 2004, and note with appreciation the comments of the Examiner therein. In response, claims 9, 10, and 18 are amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 14 and 22, specifically that at least a portion of the camptothecin drug lactone ring is noncovalently associated with the oligonucleotide. Additionally, claim 9 is amended to incorporate the limitation of a CPT-oligonucleotide complex wherein the complex is covalently associated with RNA and catalytic RNA. Claims 13-15 and 21-23 are canceled without prejudice, and the Applicant reserves the right to take up prosecution thereof in one or more continuation or divisional patent applications.

In view of the amendments to the independent claims of this application, which as expressly noted by the Examiner (pages 16-17 of the Office Action) render those claims free of the cited prior art, it is now believed that those claims are now placed in condition for allowance. Of course, the claims depending therefrom are similarly placed in condition for allowance in accordance with the teachings of *In re Fine*.¹ Accordingly, allowance of the claims of the application is respectfully requested. If any issues remain, however, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number of record in order to expedite the prosecution of this patent application.

¹ *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Respectfully submitted,

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